

and of others, was the issue of a stream of pamphlets

Characteristically they called them Tracts

If anyone

hoped to laugh, they had got in first with the

joke Among

these early Tracts—of which the majority

came, anonymously, from the tireless pen of Sidney Webb—

one in

particular, achieved both a very large

circulation and

an immense effect *Facts for Socialists*, issued in

1887 Here

was propaganda of a then novel kind the

authentic propaganda

of the deed Little or no argument, but a

marshalling

of things done and doing that spoke for

themselves In

the next year. *Facts for Londoners* drove the

demonstration

further home, and laid the main lines of an

intensely

practical programme

Webb loved London dearly he also saw it,

as it was

and the sight appalled him and haunted

him Both in

mean streets, in closest contact with poverty

at its grim-

ness and yet, like every Londoner, also in

visual contact

with wealth, with Radicalism in his blood on

both sides,

and a brain of phenomenal grasp, the facts

that he wrote

into these two Tracts had, all the days of his

upbringing,

pressed in upon him, on every hand That "

things as

they are" are wrong, and stupidly wrong,

was, for him,

a matter of early, everyday observation He

already

possessed a wealth of exact knowledge on

history, politics,

economics, far beyond that of any of his

associates, 01

anyone whom he, at this stage, encountered

in debate

To this store he was continually adding, his
great aids
being his remarkable memory and his power of
incredibly
rapid reading He really is the omnivorous
reader. but,
unlike most such, he remembers what he
reads One
glance at a punted page stamps its contents
on the tables
of his mind, and no accumulation produces
either con-
gestion or disorder there He knew his facts,
even in the
'eighties He knew, further, what he wanted
to do with
them For him, already, the central idea of
Socialism is